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THE TAHITIAN BLACK MARLIN, OR SILVER MARLIN SWORDFISH

BY J. T. NICHOLS AND F. R. LAMONTE

In preparing an article on marlin swordfish (*Makaira*) for 'Natural History,' we find that the so-called "silver marlin" caught in Tahitian waters represents a recognizable undescribed form.

Makaira nigricans tahitiensis, new subspecies

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE.—A specimen caught at Tahiti, July 24, 1931, by Eastham Guild, of which we publish a photograph (p. 2).

Total length, 11 ft. 9.5 in.; girth, 5 ft. 2 in.; caudal spread, 47 in.; weight, 504 lbs. (Guild). Depth (greatest at shoulder) in length from front of eye to base of caudal, 3.9; head without snout, 6.5; caudal spread, 2. Dorsal height (origin to tip) in head without snout, 1; anal height, 1.2; eye, 5.6. Head without snout, in snout and spear (from eye), 2.2. Spear short and stout; pectoral falcate, first dorsal and anal falcate, with firm, pointed lobes. Color uniform, and pale for a black marlin.

The photograph of a larger (record) specimen kindly sent us by its captor, Zane Grey, who concurs in our opinion that this is a distinct and undescribed form, confirms the characters shown by the type. It was taken at Tahiti in March 1930 and weighed 618 pounds (Grey). Corresponding measurements are: depth in length, 3.7; head, 6. Dorsal height in head, 1.4; anal, 1.4; eye, 7. Head in snout and spear, 1.7.

The falcate fins, stout spear, and lack of bold markings, place this form with the black marlin; the great depth, paler color and, if it holds, very wide caudal spread separate it from the black marlins of Lower California and of New Zealand which we have been unable to differentiate from one another satisfactorily. It seems from photographs to be a more compressed fish than they.

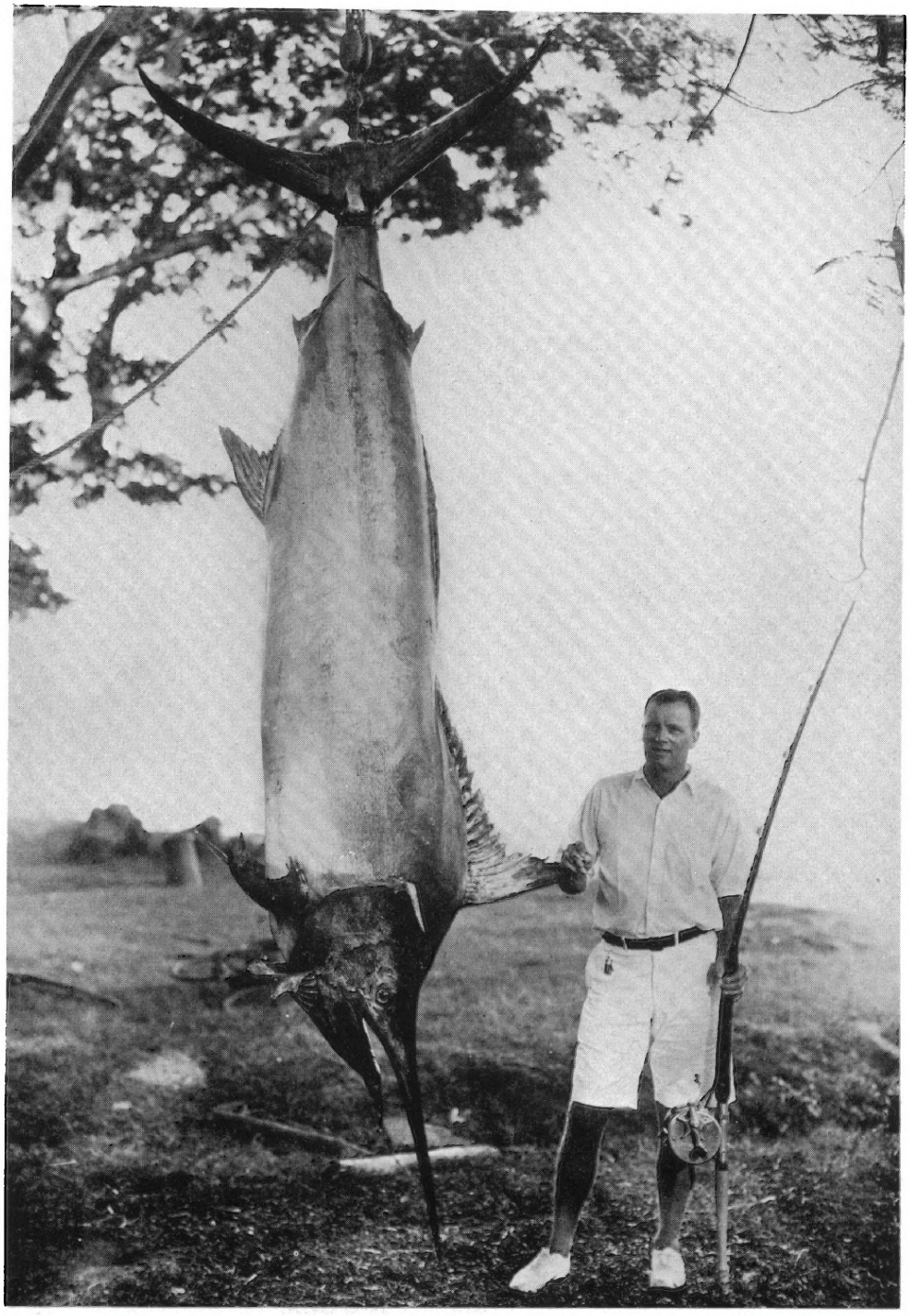

Fig. 1. *Makaira nigricans tahitiensis*, type.